

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

New claims 8-15 have been added.

This amendment adds, changes and/or deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-15 are now pending in this application.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 6, and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent. No. 5,979,931 (hereafter "Totani et al."). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites a method of producing a cover for covering a vehicle airbag comprising the steps of providing a three-dimensionally molded airbag cover; forming a tear line with a predetermined depth within the thickness of the airbag cover by ultrasonic processing.

Claim 6 recites a cover for a vehicle airbag that comprises a three-dimensionally molded plate; a continuous linear groove with a predetermined depth located in the plate; wherein the groove is formed by ultrasonic waves.

Claim 7 recites an airbag module an airbag module that comprises an airbag; a cover for covering the vehicle airbag; an accommodating member for accommodating the vehicle airbag; and a gas supplying mechanism for supplying inflation gas so that the vehicle airbag is deployed and inflated from the accommodating member, wherein the cover comprises a three-dimensionally molded plate-shaped structure and has a linear groove which is continuously disposed with a predetermined depth within the thickness of the airbag cover, and wherein, the module is configured so that when a vehicle collides at a location which is situated in front of the vehicle, the vehicle airbag is deployed by the inflation gas supplied from the gas

supplying mechanism, causing the airbag cover to tear at the linear groove, so that the vehicle airbag is further deployed and inflated in a rider protection area which is situated in front of a rider.

Totani et al. discloses an air bag cover 10 that includes a core 11 and a decorative laminate 12 that includes a skin layer 13, a fragile layer 14, a foaming layer 15, and a barrier layer 16. See Totani et al. at col. 3, lines 1-5, 48-56. Totani et al. discloses that a concave portion 18 is formed along a breakable portion 17 in the air bag cover 10 with an ultrasonic welder. See Totani et al. at col. 4, lines 27-29, 54-56. However, Totani et al. fails to disclose that the concave portion 18 is formed to predetermined depth. In fact, Totani et al. teaches that it is unnecessary to control the thickness of the skin layer 13, and therefore the thickness of the airbag cover. See Totani et al. at col. 5, lines 26-35. Therefore, Totani et al. fails to disclose all of the features of claims 1, 6, and 7. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Totani et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,308,391 (hereafter “Blaimschein et al.”). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Blaimschein et al. fails to remedy the deficiencies of Totani et al., as noted above.

Claim 2 depends upon claim 1 and is allowable over the prior art for at least the reasons noted above. Claim 2 further recites the steps of “determining a first distance between a processing edge of an ultrasonic processing mechanism and a predetermined location on the ultrasonic processing mechanism, and determining a second distance between a processing surface of the airbag cover and the predetermined location on the ultrasonic processing mechanism.”

Blaimschein et al. discloses a machining method in which a distance between a reference point on a knife and a workpiece surface is determined. See Blaimschein et al. at col. 1, lines 36-57. Blaimschein et al. fails to disclose two steps of determining a distance in relation to an ultrasonic processing mechanism. Nor does Blaimschein et al. disclose “determining a first distance between a processing edge of an ultrasonic processing

mechanism and a predetermined location on the ultrasonic processing mechanism.” The distance disclosed by Blaimschein et al., i.e. the distance between a reference point on a knife and a workpiece surface, is not a distance between a processing edge of an ultrasonic processing mechanism and a predetermined location on the ultrasonic processing mechanism.

It would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teachings of Totani et al. by the teachings of Blaimschein et al. to produce the claimed method. A basic requirement of a *prima facie* case of obviousness is that a prior art reference, or references when combined, teach or suggest all claim limitations. See M.P.E.P. §§ 2143, 2143.03. Because Totani et al. and Blaimschein et al., alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all of the features of claim 2, it would not have been obvious to combine the teachings of these reference to produce the claimed method. Nor would one of ordinary skill have had a motivation to made such a combination.

For at least the reasons noted above, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 3 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Totani et al. in view of Blaimschein et al. as applied to claim 2, and further in view of U.S. 6,737,607 (hereafter “Nicholas et al.”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Nicholas et al. discloses a laser cutting apparatus in which a first sensor is used to directly determine the depth of a cut in the same spot that a laser beam is cutting a workpiece, and a second sensor that is arranged on an opposite side of the workpiece for determining a remaining thickness of the workpiece. See Nicholas et al. at col. 1, lines 48-64. However, Nicholas et al. does not disclose or suggest the step of “determining a first distance between a processing edge of an ultrasonic processing mechanism and a predetermined location on the ultrasonic processing mechanism.” Therefore, Nicholas et al. fails to remedy the deficiencies of Totani et al. and Blaimschein et al. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Totani et al. in view of Blaimschein et al. as applied to claim 2, and further in view of U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0069736 (hereafter “Yasoda et al.”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Yasoda et al. discloses cutting apparatus in which lowering amount data of a cutting blade is determined by detecting a knife edge. See paragraphs 0030 and 0031 of Yasoda et al. However, Nicholas et al. does not disclose or suggest the step of "determining a first distance between a processing edge of an ultrasonic processing mechanism and a predetermined location on the ultrasonic processing mechanism." Therefore, Yasoda et al. fails to remedy the deficiencies of Totani et al. and Blaimschein et al. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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By 

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